

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 897
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AMCONSUL TORONTO POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0067

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CINT, CA
SUBJECT: FEDERAL LIBERALS ACTIVE IN QUEBEC

1. FEDERAL LIBERALS ARE INTENSIFYING THEIR ACTIVITIES IN QUEBEC CITY IN PREPARATION FOR UPCOMING BYELECTION CAMPAIGN. SINCE TRUDEAU'S SPEECH ON JANUARY 28TH THREE OTHER MEMBERS OF FEDERAL CABINET HAVE COME TO QUEBEC CITY, I.E., LALANDE, QUELLET AND JEAN CHRETIAN.

2. LATTER SPOKE TO ST. FOY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FEBRUARY 14 EMPHASIZING ADVANTAGES QUEBEC ENJOYS AS PART OF CANADA. HE POINTED TO RECENTLY IMPOSED LIMITATION OF TEXTILE IMPORTS BY GOC AS CASE IN POINT. CHRETIAN CLAIMED PROTECTIONIST DECISION WAS NOT POPULAR ELSEWHERE IN CANADA, BUT WAS TAKEN BECAUSE 23 PERCENT OF QUEBEC WORKERS IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR ARE EMPLOYED IN THIS VULNERABLE INDUSTRY. HE POINTED OUT THAT 70 PERCENT OF QUEBEC'S PRODUCTION OF TEXTILES IS "EXPORTED" TO OTHER PARTS OF CANADA." THAT IS FEDERALISM," HE ASSERTED.

3. CHRETIAN THEN CITED AS ANOTHER FEDERAL ACTION BENEFITING
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QUEBEC THE CANADAIK SUCCESS IN OBTAINING MANUFACTURING RIGHTS FOR LEAR STAR EXECUTIVE JETS WHICH HE CLAIMED WOULD MEAN CREATION OF 1500 JOBS IN QUEBEC DURING NEXT 10 YEARS.

4. AFTER DESCRIBING FEDERAL CARROTS CHRETIAN ATTEMPTED REVEAL POTENTIAL STICKS. "TO THINK THAT ONE CAN DIVORCE AND REMARRY AGAIN IN SIX MONTHS IS TO DREAM IN TECHNICOLOR." HE TOLD AUDIENCE.

MONETARY UNION-PROPOSED AS POST-INDEPENDENCE POSSIBILITY
BY RENE LEVESQUE IN NEW YORK-WILL NOT BE EASY IF QUEBEC
SEPERATES". FINALLY HE ASSERTED, QUEBEC WILL BE DEPRIVED OF HER
SHARE OF THE POTENTIAL ARCTIC GAS AND OIL WEALTH SHOULD
SHE SEPARATE.

5. COMMENT: FEDERAL LIBERALS ARE BEGINNING TO FOCUS ON RID-
INGS IN WHICH BYELECTIONS WILL BE HELD NEXT SPRING. JUDGING
FROM THEIR EARLY EMPHASIS, THEY WOULD LIKE MAKE SEPARATION
MAJOR ISSUE OF ELECTION. HOWEVER AT PRESENT IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL
THAT ELECTORATE WILL CONSIDER THIS ISSUE AS PARTICULARLY
RELEVANT IN FEDERAL ELECTION IN WHICH ALL CANDIDATES ARE THEMSELVES
FEDERALISTS. HOWEVER, LIBERALS MAY POSSIBLY HAVE DUAL PURPOSE
IN MIND. FIRST, THEIR ATTACKS ON SEPERATISM ARE AIMED AS PART OF
FEDERAL-
IST CAMPAIGN DEFEAT SEPERATISM. ANCILLARY GOAL, MORE ORIENTED
TO SHORT TERM ELECTORIAL
NEEDS IS TO PROJECT IMAGE OF RESPONSIBLE FRANCOPHONE TEAM
ATTEMPTING DEFEND QUEBECOIS INTERESTS AT FEDERAL LEVEL.
SOME SUGGEST HOWEVER THAT CHOICE OF SEPARATISM AS MAJOR ISSUE
IS NOTHING MORE THAN SIGN OF DESPERATION.
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